



# OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY

Connecting People ... Building Community...Transforming Lives

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Susan Quinn, Director

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **\$25,000 AWARDED TO OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY FOUNDATION BY OCEANFIRST FOUNDATION**

*Funding to support ESL - English as a Second Language Project*

**Toms River, NJ** - The Ocean County Library Foundation has been awarded a \$25,000 multi-year grant for its ESL- English as a Second Language Project from the OceanFirst Foundation of Toms River. The Ocean County Library Foundation will facilitate the grant which will provide educational support and will benefit non-native English speakers as well as new U.S. residents throughout the county.

Ocean County Library will provide free services to residents who need assistance in learning basic English through ESL classes as a result of this major grant funding from the OceanFirst Foundation. "The Foundation is excited for the opportunity to facilitate this amazing grant with the Ocean County Library to assist our residents in providing basic English language classes," said Mary O. Malagiere, Ocean County Library Foundation Chairperson.

"As part of the grant, the Ocean County Library will introduce participants to our electronic resources that provide language instruction for people who wish to learn English or practice English such as Pronunciator and Mango languages," said Susan Quinn, Director of Ocean County Library. "The library also offers self-directed continuing education and career enhancement opportunities for adults through online resources such as Universal Class and Lynda.com. These resources are free with an Ocean County Library card and available through the library's website or at any library branch."

"We are pleased to support the Ocean County Library in delivering English as a Second Language classes to the community and provide free services to those residents who need assistance in learning basic English," said Katherine Durante, Executive Director of the OceanFirst Foundation. With the funding, new English speakers will gain confidence in their language skills, allowing them to become more engaged in the civic and business life of their communities.

"We are very excited about this new opportunity to serve our customers who may be new to Ocean County or who may not speak English as their first language. We are very grateful to the OceanFirst Foundation and the Ocean County Library Foundation who made this all possible," said Rita Oakes, Ocean County Library Chief Librarian. The U.S. Census reports that approximately 71,000 Ocean County residents over the age of five speak a language other than English in their home. Of those, 37% speak English less than "very well." Developing English language skills increases the quality of life and ability to grow as fully engaged community members and citizens.

"English classes for immigrants have a lasting, positive impact on participants, along with other library programs such as citizenship classes, parenting and technology sessions which are free for all of our customers," said Cathi Sheridan, Ocean County Library Lakewood Branch Manager. The library will continue to build relationships with new English speakers who may have never had access to libraries before moving to Ocean County.

Since its founding in 1902, OceanFirst Bank ([www.oceanfirst.com](http://www.oceanfirst.com)) has built a solid reputation and legacy as a good neighbor and responsible corporate citizen. The Bank's strong commitment to helping families,

organizations, schools and communities throughout central New Jersey meet their financial needs has spanned several generations reaching new heights in 1996 with the creation of the OceanFirst Foundation. The Foundation provides grants to organizations that meet community needs within the OceanFirst market area. Since its inception, OceanFirst Foundation has contributed more than \$26 million to over 600 local charities and schools in Ocean, Monmouth and Middlesex counties. To learn more about OceanFirst Foundation visit [www.oceanfirstfdn.org](http://www.oceanfirstfdn.org).

The Ocean County Library Foundation is a 501c3 tax exempt organization established in 2001, to enhance the services and opportunities offered to all Ocean County Library users. The Library Foundation supports and believes in the Ocean County Library's Mission of "Connecting People, Building Community, and Transforming Lives". It also undertakes a variety of fund-raising and grant-writing activities, using its skills at raising both private and public funds to provide support for non-traditional library programs and services not covered by tax dollars or budget. The Library Foundation is committed toward the goal of enhancing all library services, programs, and facilities to foster an appreciation and awareness of the Ocean County Library in the community.

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